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## *James J. Kilpatrick* **Marshmallows Over Miami**

They were ordered to balance cups of water on their heads and then to hum "The Star-Spangled Banner." They were given marshmallows and ordered to huff them at fellow participants they disagreed with. For hours on end they were bullied and browbeaten in the name of "sensitivity training." And all this was done in Miami this summer with your money. Nothing much is gained, it seems to me, by grouching grandly about billions of dollars in waste. No one understands billions of dollars. But all of us can understand a relatively few thousand dollars. Pray over this example, if you will:

Back in 1964, Congress created the Urban Mass Transportation Administration. In Section 6 of the act, grants were authorized for vaguely defined "research." In the current fiscal year, \$48.6 million was made available for such grants. Down in Miami, the Metropolitan Dade County Transportation Administration cast a hungry eye on that nice chunk of money. This past February, with the unanimous approval of the county commissioners, it applied to UMTA for a grant of \$1,125,800 to be paid over a three-year period. UMTA approved the application, and the first year's installment of \$362,159 came rolling in.

The program envisioned a labor-management demonstration project with four components—stress management and exercise, quality improvement, capacity training and sensitivity training. The idea of the fourth was "to assist employees in developing their sensitivities in order to interact successfully with per-

sons of opposite sexes, diverse opinions, cultures, ethnic backgrounds; and with visibly identifying handicaps for establishing a harmonious work environment."

Toward that end, the transit authority retained Charles H. King as a consultant and instructor. He is a black man, 57, described by the Miami Herald as a "towering figure" who wheels around in size-14 boots, "insulting, badgering and bullying" the white employees who were directed to attend his two-day sessions. This is to establish that he is their master. "You fool!" he bellows at a participant who gets out of line. "How dare any white person tell me I'm wrong!" he booms. In order to establish their submission to his will, the students must obey his orders for such exercises as the cups of water and the thrown marshmallows. In recent years he has been putting on these performances, he told the Herald, for several major corporations, the U.S. Navy, and for local governments in Atlanta and Boston. He has conducted nine seminars for the CIA. Some of the white participants in Miami, interviewed by the Herald, thought they got something out of the experience. Others seemed doubtful.

Eighteen years ago, when the UMTA act was passed, I objected strenuously to the whole idea of federal subsidies for local transit systems. I argued in vain that nothing in the Constitution could justify such outlays. The whole program still strikes me as wrong—and such vacuous grants as the one in Miami strike me as especially wrong. In Miami's melting pot, racial and ethnic sensitivity is surely desirable, but how did the sensitivity of Dade County bus drivers get to be a national responsibility? The answer can be found in a letter from transit officials to the commissioner, urging approval of the application. The program, it was emphasized, would require no local funding. It would be financed "entirely in federal dollars."

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